



CONNECTICUT CHAPTER
of the American College of Surgeons
Professional Association, Inc.



Testimony on
House Bill 5152 An Act Concerning the Prescribing of Controlled Substances Used in
Medication-Assisted Treatment of Substance Abuse Disorders Through the Use of Telehealth
House Bill 5299 An Act Concerning Telehealth Prescribing for
Treatment of Psychiatric Disorders
Senate Bill 302 An Act Telehealth Services

Public Health Committee
March 16, 2018

Senator Gerratana, Senator Somers, Representative Steinberg and members of the Public Health Committee, on behalf of the physicians and physicians in training of our organizations listed above, please accept this testimony in opposition to **House Bill 5152 An Act Concerning the Prescribing of Controlled Substances Used in Medication-Assisted Treatment of Substance Abuse Disorders Through the Use of Telehealth, House Bill 5299 An Act Concerning Telehealth Prescribing for Treatment of Psychiatric Disorders, and Senate Bill 302 An Act Telehealth Services.** CSMS and CT ACS support the intent of House Bill 5152 and House Bill 5299 as an attempt to increase access to treatment for substance abuse disorders and mental health services respectively.

For several sessions now, we have pushed hard in support of legislation to expand resources available to treat the horrible disease of addiction not only through access to appropriate care, but using Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) in conjunction with the necessary counseling and support services to ensure successful recovery. Implementing the appropriate use of MAT medications such as Suboxone, Buprenorphine, and Methadone into the recovery process improves outcomes. CSMS has also fought for parity in mental health coverage and access to treatment for psychiatric disorders.

Throughout our support and advocacy on these issues, we also have been heavily involved in the development of legislation and efforts to establish parameters for the reasonable and safe use of telehealth services. These efforts have mainly been to ensure that appropriate physician patient relationships exist and the remote prescribing be controlled and limited. We therefore support efforts to increase appropriate access to MAT and psychiatric services through the use of telehealth and offer the resources and input of our organization to develop appropriate legislation.

Regarding Senate Bill 302, we feel that similar conversations must be had prior to expanding the category of providers who may participate in telehealth services to ensure that such encounters are appropriately within the scope of the providing professional and meet the same high standard and requirements established for all telehealth services, including integration into the patient's medical record.

We welcome the opportunity to work with committee members as these proposed pieces of legislation progress.